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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4345
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 3743
CINCPAC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 2774

CINCPAC FOR POLAD
REF: A. SAIGON 2597 AND B. SAIGON 2616

1. AFTER THREE HOUR CLOSED SESSION MORNING AUGUST 10 SIX CANDIDATES AND ONE CANDIDATE'S REPRESENTATIVES SIGNED JOINT COMMUNIQUE RESOLVING TO SUSPEND JOINT PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN APPEARANCES PENDING "PRECISE AND SATISFACTORY" REPLY FROM THIEU AND KY TO CANDIDATES' LETTER OF AUGUST 8

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(REF A). COMMUNIQUE TRANSMITTED SEPTEL.

2. CANDIDATES' MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY PRESIDENTIAL CONTENDERS TRAN VAN HUONG, PHA THUC KYBN TRUONG DINH DZU, TRAN VAN LY AND VU HONG KHANH. VICE-PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE DR. PHAN QUANG DAN REPRESENTED RUNNING-MATE SUU AND NGUYEN HOA HIEP WAS REPRESENTED BY HIS DELEGATE ON CENTRAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE. INITIALLY, THIEU/KY

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SLATE WAS REPRESENTED BY MR. HOANG NGAN, BUT HE WALKED OUT OS MEETING SHORTLY AFTER IT BEGAN. WHEN SESSION ENDED, MOST PARTICIPANTS REMAINED FOR BRIEF CONFERENCE WITH LOCAL AND FOREIGN PRESS. DP. DAN, HOWEVER, LEFT IMMEDIATELY AND HA THUC KY SHORTLY THEREAFTER. BOTH DAN AND KY NONETHELESS SIGNED COMMUNIQUE.

3. AT PRESS CONFERENCE, TRUONG DINH DZU READ TEXT OF COMMUNIQUE, THEN TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH FOR BENEFIT OF FOREIGN JOURNALISTS. ONLY OTHER CANDIDATE TO SPEAK WAS TRAN VAN HUONG WHO DISPLAYED BEFORE TV CAMERAS

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PHOTOGRAPHS OF CANDIDATES AT DONG HA ON AUGUST 6. HUONG BLASTED PM KY FOR HAVING SUGGESTED THAT CANDIDATES EXPECTED TO BE MET BY MERCEDES SEDANS AND REITERATED IMPOSSIBILITY OF USING SEATLESS U.S. MARINE CORPS TRUCKS TO GO TO QUANG TRI. HE AGAINS CHARACTERIZED TREATMENT OF CANDIDATES BY GVN ON FIRST CAMPAIGN TRIP AS HUMILIATING, UNDIGNIFIED EXPERIENCE.

4. PUBLIC ASSURANCES BY THIEU AND KY AT AUGUST 8 PRESS CONFERENCES (REF B) APPARENTLY CONSIDERED INADEQUATE. ACCORDING COMMUNIQUE, FAILURE OF THIEU AND KY TO GIVE ASSURANCES IN WRITING IS INDICATION THAT GVN "IS NOT TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSURING SECURITY OF THE SLATES." COMMUNIQUE ALSO INJECTS NEW CHARGE AGAINST GVN BY SAYING THAT GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO DENY VOTERS ACCESS TO CANDIDATES DURING VISIT TO HUE. (HUE VISIT WOULD HAVE TAKEN PLACE AULUST 7d)

5. COMMUNIQUE DOES NOT RPT NOT STATE THAT SIGNATORIES

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WILL CEASE ALL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES. BY ALL ACCOUNTS, OTHER FORMS OF CAMPAIGNING WILL CONTINUE, INCLUDING INDIVIDUAL TRIPS TO PROVINCES BY CANDIDATES IF THEY

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WISH TO MAKE THEM. SOME SOURCES ALSO SAY THAT CANDIDATES PLAN APPEAR AT AUGUST 14 JOINT CAMPAIGN PRESS CONFERENCE, AS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED.

6. SINCE COMMUNIQUE ISSUED WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH TRUONG THAI TON (IN PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE) AND DIRECTORATE SECGEN PHAM XUAN CHIEU# TON SAID THAT HE UNDERSTOOD CANDIDATE'S REPRESENTATIVES IN CENTRAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE HAD AT FIRST AGREED TO CONTINUE THE CAMPAIGN BUT THEY WERE THEN OVERRIDDEN BY THE CANDIDATES IN LATTER'S LATER MEETING. AS FOR A WRITTEN REPLY BY THIEU AND KY, TON SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THAT GENERAL THIEU CONSIDERED HIS COMMENTS AT THE AUGUST 8 PRESS CONFERENCE AN ADEQUATE RESPONSE. TON ANTICIPATES THAT THIEU AND KY MAY GET TOGETHER TONIGHT TO DISCUSS THE MATTER. BOTH OF THEM HAVE BEEN OUT OF SAIGON TODAY.

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7. CHIEU WAS APPARENTLY UNAWARE OF COMMUNIQUE. AFTER EMBOFF TOLD HIM ABOUT IT, HE COMMENTED THAT IT IS CLEAR THAT BETTER CAMPAIGN MACHINERY AND ARRANGEMENTS MUST BE SET UP IN THE FUTURE IN ORDER TO AVOID INCIDENTS SUCH AS THE DONG HA AFFAIR. ASKED IF HE EXPECTS THIEU TO REPLY IN WRITING NOW, CHIEU WAS NONCOMMITTAL BUT DID SAY THAT THIEU HAS BEEN OUT OF TOWN FOR THE PAST TWO DAYS. THIEU IS EXPECTED BACK IN SAIGON THIS EVENING, AND CHIEU SAID HE WOULD SEE HIM THEN ABOUT THE MATTER.

8. COMMENT:

A. AMBASSADOR EXPECTS TO SEE PRIME MINISTER KY AUGUST 11 ON A NUMBER OF MATTERS AND WILL TAKE UP THIS PROBLEM AND THE QUESTION OF GVN ORGANIZATION FOR THE CAMPAIGN WITH HIM AT THAT TIME. AMBASSADOR ALSO PLANS TO SEE THIEU SOON. WE WILL ALSO CONTINUE TO URGE BOTH THE CANDIDATES AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO MAKE CONSTRUCTIVE

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EFFORTS TO GET THE CAMPAIGN BACK ON THE TRACK. WITH BOTH TON AND CHIEU WE EXPRESSED CONCERN AND THE HOPE THAT A BLOCK WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO DEVELOP BETWEEN THE CANDIDATES AND THE GOVERNMENT WHICH WOULD STOP THE OFFICIAL CAMPAIGN.

B. THE CANDIDATES WHO SIGNED THE COMMUNIQUE PROBABLY BELIEVE THEY A
E GETTING MORE AND BETTER PUBLICITY BY AGITATING THIS ISSUE THAN THEY COULD OBTAIN ON THE PLANNED VISITS TO THE PROVINCES. CHIEF LEADERS OF THE EFFORT APPEAR TO BE HUONG AND DZU. IF THIEU AND KY RESPOND MODERATELY AND CONSTRUCTIVELY, THE CANDIDATES HOPEFULLY WILL CONCLUDE THAT IT IS MORE PROFITABLE TO GO ON WITH THE CAMPAIGN.

C. THE CANDIDATES ARE MAKING EVERY EFFORT TO KEEP THE FOREIGN PRESS FULLY INFORMED, PRESUMABLY IN HOPES OF PUTTING MORE PRESSURE ON THIEU AND KY.

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